

handphone. By then, I was distraught. → what? (distressed)

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I then spotted a glow in the distance, but I ^{why? (5)} hesitated going towards it. What if the *Tuareg* tribe was by that fire? They were known to ignore strangers and not render assistance ⁽⁵⁾ to those in

need. But knowing that I had no other choice, I took a risk and headed towards the glow. As I went nearer, I realised that by the fire

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was a woman from a different tribe – the *Wodaabe* tribe. I had photographed them before and they were a very compassionate people. Since I could not even speak ^{How?} a few words of a tribal language, I had to gesture wildly to the *Wodaabe* woman, trying

desperately to tell her that I was lost and that my camp was 'somewhere out there in the desert'. It was then that I regretted my

earlier stubbornness ^{what? (3)} and I was now paying dearly ^{How? Can't communicate!} for it.

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Miraculously, the *Wodaabe* woman seemed to understand me.

Putting me on her camel, the *Wodaabe* woman led it effortlessly across the featureless desert ^{why?} till we reached my camp.

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After this experience, there was a significant change ^{what? (6)} in the way I thought about technology. I was brought back to safety ⁽⁷⁾ not with the help of technology ⁽⁶⁾ which I had thought I could always count on, but with the help of a trustworthy Wodaabe woman ⁽⁶⁾.

And of course, I could now speak a tribal language with some fluency.

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Indeed, as I reflected on my experience in the desert, I was grateful for it. ^{why? (7)}

Why?
When I was a travel writer and photographer, I found great pleasure in interacting with the various tribes living in the Sahara Desert. As I believed in the uses and benefits of technology, I would sometimes show the tribes my handphone — an essential item in modern day living. I would also let them take a shot or two with my camera. With the help of a translator, I would explain to my captivated audience the usefulness of modern day gadgets. While I congratulated myself for letting these tribes have a glimpse of our modern world, I also pitied them. They would never be able to enjoy the benefits of our advanced technology.

On my recent assignment with my colleague, Arif, to photograph some tribes in the desert, I even taught them some English. This I did to the annoyance of my colleague. "Please, mister, you are a guest in their land," Arif protested. "You should be learning their language, not teaching them English! Think they will ever use it?"

Shrugging my shoulders, I said. "But it's always good to know another language." I must admit, however, that I would never want to learn their tribal language. It was much too difficult.

One night, hoping to take some photographs of the desert, I took a stroll alone in the desert. When I wanted to return to camp, I realised that I had strayed too far off and was lost! I tried calling Arif on my handphone but to no avail. I just could not get through to him. Try as I might, I could not get my handphone to work. I stared at my